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The recapitulation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*

Máirín MacCarron and Joanna Story

Bede concluded his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* with a chapter (*HE* V.24) that contains four elements: a chronological recapitulation of the main events of the *History*; a brief self-pen-portrait; his list of writings; a closing prayer.[1] This essay is concerned with the recapitulation, which holds an important place in the development of annals as a form of historiographical writing. It is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, historiographical text to order a series of events – briefly explained – in sequence by AD (*Anno Domini*) dating. Brevity is a key element of Bede's recapitulation. In stating that he was recapitulating in brief things that had been discussed more extensively, Bede was explicitly observing the patristic principle of *recapitulatio* as both a literary device and as an exegetical tool. This concept has not previously been associated with Bede's historiography but helps illuminate both his working methods and his Christ-centred epistemology of chronology and time.

There is also much to consider in the content and organisation of the recapitulation. Although, it may appear dominated by kings in the first instance, assessment of gender representation reveals other patterns in this short text, especially concerning who was included or omitted, and concealed meanings are revealed when individual items are linked. Furthermore, analysis of early copies of the *History* shows that, very quickly, these short, closing annals were subject to amplification and intervention. In this context, it is important that what is probably the earliest copy of the *History*, known as the Moore Bede, not only reveals early phases of augmentation with chronological materials in England, but also that it was taken to Francia before *c*. 800 where it was closely read, copied, and augmented still further with additional comparative material. Bede's recapitulation of his *History*, thus, provided eighth-century readers in both the English and Frankish kingdoms with a worked

[1] For the recapitulation, see N.J. Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede: the* Ecclesiastical History *in context* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 82–95; Bede's brief autobiography, Peter Darby and Máirín MacCarron, 'The autobiographical statement of Bede the Scholar in *Ecclesiastical history* 5:24,' in P. Darby and M. MacCarron (eds), *Bede the Scholar* (Manchester: MUP, 2023), 7–32; Bede's list of writings, Wilhelm Levison, 'Bede as Historian,' in A. H. Thompson (ed.), *Bede: His Life, Times and Writings. Essays in Commemoration of the Twelfth Centenary of his Death* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), 111–51 at 132; Bede's prayer, Susan Cremin, 'Bede and the Gospel of John: theology, preaching, and the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*,'' in Darby and MacCarron (eds), *Bede the Scholar*, 97–118 at 114–17.

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example of a novel historiographical format that was theologically cogent, Christological in structure, and malleable in form.

Context

The recapitulation in *HE* V.24 contains fifty-one annalistic entries in total, fifty that are dated by AD and one by BC, which will be discussed below. This short text is important for many reasons, not least because the last entry supplies a terminal date for the completion of the *History* as a whole, that is, 731.[2] In some manuscripts, however, particularly among those that circulated in England, two additional entries have been added at the end of the list, discussing astronomical events that occurred in 733 and 734.[3] These two extra entries have led some to argue for a late and possibly authorial phase of revision, after 731 but before Bede's death on the eve of the feast of the Ascension, in May 735.[4]

The label 'recapitulation' comes from Bede himself. He opened this chapter with a statement that reveals the purpose of the chronological list.

> *Verum ea, quae temporum distinctione latius digesta sunt, ob memoriam conseruandam*, *breuiter recapitulari placuit*.
> But, for the sake of preserving them in memory, I have decided to recapitulate in brief those things that have been discussed more extensively, in chronological sequence.

This concern for order and the proper division of time reflects Bede's long-standing expertise in computus and chronology, exemplified by his treatises, *De Temporibus* (703) and *De Temporum Ratione* (725, hereafter *DTR*), both of which incorporated chronicles dated by the

[2] Also in *HE* V.23.
[3] These are in manuscripts of what Plummer called the c-type, Mynors called *c* (after the Cotton Tiberius Bede): Charles Plummer, 'Introduction,' to Plummer (ed.), *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896) vol. 1, lx–clxiv at xciv–xcv; R.A.B. Mynors, 'Textual Introduction,' in Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (eds), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969, repr. 2001), xxxix–lxxiv at xli. These manuscripts also omit the two entries for 697–8: see further below.
[4] That Bede continued working until the end of his life is attested in the first-hand account of his death by Cuthbert, a former pupil of Bede's and later abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow: Cuthbert, *Epistola de obitu Bedae*, in Colgrave and Mynors (eds), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 580–6. On authorial revisions to the *History* after 731, see Walter Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History (550–800)* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988), 242 n. 36 and 295 n. 260; D. P. Kirby, *Bede's* Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*: its contemporary setting*, Jarrow Lecture 1992, 3–6; Joanna Story, 'After Bede: continuing the *Ecclesiastical History*,' in Stephen Baxter et al. (eds), *Early Medieval Studies in memory of Patrick Wormald* (London: Routledge, 2009), 165–84 at 165–8.

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number of years since Creation, *Anno Mundi*. In contrast, here, he used the year of the incarnation (*Anno ab incarnatione Domini*), which is the dating system that he had deployed to great effect in the *History*, creating a linear chronological spine for the narrative alongside several other dating systems, such as the indiction, which was cyclical, and regnal years (including imperial years and local reigns).[5] To that end, the recapitulation with its singular use of *Anno Domini* dates underlines Bede's preference for, and the centrality of, that dating system in the *History*. The subsequent normalcy of historical writing and documents dated by years AD, in England and Francia, obscures Bede's ingenuity in this instance.[6] One of Bede's major chronological innovations was to transform AD into a framework suitable for historical chronology.[7]

Bede's choice of the verb *recapitulare* also repays attention. At first sight, it seems straightforward, referring to the task in hand, namely, a brief summary of the main points already covered by the preceding text. The verb also incorporates the noun, *capitulum*, or heading, commonly used to refer to chapter headings, especially of the books of the Bible.[8] These *capitula* were intended to help a reader navigate a text by summarising its content in list form at the beginning, as was the case for the *capitula* at the beginning of each book of the *History*. Bede's chronological *capitula*, however, are placed at the end of his text, and, as such, provide a tool to look back, triggering recollection (*ob memoriam conseruandam*) of the story that had already unfolded in the body of the *History* in the wake of each event.[9] So, for example, the short recapitulation entry for 642, recording the killing of King Oswald (*Anno DCXLII Osuald rex occisus*), could prompt readers to recall *HE* III.9 where that event had been described in detail. There, they could reflect not just on the battle of *Maserfelth*, where

[5] Máirín MacCarron, 'Bede, *Annus Domini* and the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*,' in J.E. Rutherford and David Woods (eds), *The mystery of Christ in the Fathers of the Church* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), 116–34; and Máirín MacCarron, *Bede and Time: computus, theology and history in the early medieval world* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), esp. 145–9.
[6] McKitterick argues that the *Annales regni Francorum* are the first in Francia to use the year of the Incarnation as the organisational principle of the narrative; these annals begin in 741, and the first section may have been composed in the late 780s; R. McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004), 97, 102-3.
[7] See further MacCarron, *Bede and Time*, 136–56.
[8] Celia Chazelle, 'Bede's biblical *capitula* and the oriented reading of Scripture at Wearmouth-Jarrow,' in Darby and MacCarron (eds), *Bede the Scholar*, 53–96. Bede also included *capitula* for each of the five books of the *History* (138 in total).
[9] The phrase was also used by Rufinus in Book V.1 of his translation of Eusebius's *Historia ecclesiastica*: 'quae ad rerum gestarum memoriam conservandam litteris mandata repperimus'; E. Schwartz and T. Mommsen (eds), *Eusebius Werke. Die Kirchengeschichte mit der Lateinischen Übersetzung des Rufinus,* 2 vols (Leipzig, 1903), I, p. 401, line 7. On Bede's use of Rufinus, see M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford, 2006), 207–8 (no. 118), including use of this chapter in his Martyrology.

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the *rex Christianissimus* had been killed, but also on the *damnatio memoriae* of the apostate kings who had briefly preceded him and whose sordid reputations Bede juxtaposed with the miraculous evidence of Oswald's exceptional piety. Each annal in the recapitulation, therefore, can be read as a highly compressed statement that functions as a key to unlock a bigger story.

Bede's deployment of a recapitulation at the end of the *History* also suggests awareness of a wider discussion among patristic writers about the spiritual meaning of 'recapitulation' and its use as a literary device in Scripture.[10] Quoting Tyconius's sixth rule on scriptural interpretation within his own *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine had said that recapitulation in Scripture enabled things to be said, 'in such a way that it looks as if they are proceeding in chronological order, or in a continuous sequence, when in fact the narrative covertly switches back to matters that had been overlooked. Failure to recognise the operation of this rule leads to misunderstanding'.[11] Augustine provided examples from Scripture to support this form of analysis, showing how restatements often drew attention to elements that were implied rather than explicit in the first iteration of a biblical story. This insight into recapitulation as a tool used by exegetes for unveiling meaning hidden in the first instance provides another way of understanding the content as well as the form and function of the short annals in Bede's closing chapter.

Bede may also have been aware of Jerome's discussion of an important verse in the first chapter of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.[12] Jerome had been puzzled by the fact that, *in*

[10] For a useful summary of the patristic material, see Michael P. Foley, 'The Reform of the Calendar and the Reduction of Liturgical Recapitulation', in Alcuin Reid, ed., *Liturgy in the Twenty-First Century: Contemporary Issues and Perspectives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 321–41 at 323–4

[11] 'Sextam regulam Tychonius Recapitulationem vocat, in obscuritate Scripturarum satis vigilanter inventam. Sic enim dicuntur quaedam, quasi sequantur in ordine temporis vel rerum continuatione narrentur, cum ad priora quae praetermissa fuerant, latenter narratio revocetur. Quod nisi ex hac hac regula intellegatur erratur', Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 3.36.52 (122) (CPL 263); R. P. H. Green, ed. and trans., *De doctrina Christiana*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 188–89. For Bede's thorough knowledge of Tyconius' Commentary on Revelation, which applies this principle of recapitulation, and which he knew independently of citations in Augustine, see, F. Wallis, *Bede: Commentary on Revelation*, Translated Texts for Historians, 58 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 14–16, especially 15 note 30, and Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), 225 (no. 234, Tyconius) and 199 (no. 55, Augustine).

[12] 'Pro recapitulare in latinis codicibus scriptum est, instaurare et miror cur ipso uerbo graeco non usi sint translatores, cum istiusmodi licentia, dialectica et philosophia sicut in graeco habentur, assumptae sint. Nam et oratores in epilogis, uel ante epilogos, in fine causarum propter memoriam iudicum et eorum qui audiere negotia, recordationem, id est, ἀνακεφαλαίωσιν solent facere, ut quae prius latius disputarant, breui postea sermone comprehendant, et unusquisque recordari eorum incipiat quae audiuit', Jerome, *Commentariorum in epistolam ad Ephesios* (CPL 0591); R. E. Heine, trans., *The Commentaries of Origen and Jerome on St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 95–98. For Bede's knowledge and use of Jerome's commentary on Paul's letters, see

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latinis codicibus, the Greek of Paul's original letter had been translated *instaurare* ('to renew') rather than *recapitulare* ('to recapitulate'). Indeed, *instaurare* is the word used in the relevant verse of Paul's letter in Codex Amiatinus, the complete extant copy of Jerome's Vulgate translation of the Bible made during Bede's lifetime at his own monastery of Wearmouth and Jarrow. There, on fol. 972v, Ephesians 1.10 reads;

> … *in dispensationem plenitudinis temporum instaurare omnia in Christo*
> *quae in caelis et quae in terra sunt in ipso*.
> … in the dispensation of the fullness of time, to renew all things in Christ,
> things in heaven and things on earth, in him. [Eph. 1.10]

A better translation of Paul's Greek phrase, Jerome had argued, should properly be read in Latin as *recapitulare omnia in Christo,* 'to recapitulate all things in Christ'. The practice of recapitulation (ἀνακεφαλαίωσιν or *anakephalaiõsis*), Jerome explained, enabled orators and judges to summarise, 'what they had discussed at length before, so that they may afterwards grasp it in a short speech, and each one may begin to remember what he had heard'.[13] Jerome's explanation of this rhetorical device, thus, had exactly the same function as that intended by Bede, who deployed the step-wise, orderly division of time as a tool for remembering, thereby encouraging his readers to recollect and unpack the longer story for which each short annalistic summary provided the key.

Bede's orderly 'chronological sequence' also recalls the eschatological 'fullness of time' of Paul's text. The phrase 'omnia in Christo' is even more potent, reflecting profound cosmological and exegetical principles; Paul's 'recapitulation of all things in Christ', in Bede's context, incorporates the journey of the English peoples through conversion to salvation.[14] As

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Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 215 (no. 151), although he records no direct quotations from Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

[13] This principle also accounts for the collection of summaries of decisions made at royal assemblies in the Frankish kingdom into documents called 'capitularies'. On the connection between the oral pronouncements at those meetings and the written *capitula* that summarised them, see Janet L. Nelson, 'Literacy in Carolingian government', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1990), 265–7.

[14] Bede discussed this verse (using the Vulgate vocabulary) in his florilegium of Augustine on Paul, commenting that, 'things on earth are restored when those predestined for eternal life are renewed from their state of corruption'; trans. D. Hurst, *Bede the Venerable: Extracts from the Works of St Augustine on the Letters of the Apostle Paul* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1999), 233 (from Augustine, *Enchiridion* 62). There is no edition of Bede's *Collectio ex opusculis sancti Augustini in Epistulas Pauli Apostoli* but for an early witness to the text, see Cologne, Dombibliothek cod. 104 (fol. 135v), s. ix 2/4, https://digital.dombibliothek-koeln.de/hs/content/zoom/172485.

others have shown, Bede's *History* also functioned as an eschatological narrative, incorporating the English within a biblical timeframe and a narrative that stretched backwards – and forwards – to the times of Christ.[15] The very concept of 'recapitulation' as encapsulated by Paul (and discussed by Augustine, Tertullian, Origen and others), it has been argued, points to a 'distinctively Christian understanding of how God is presented in human history', namely, 'a going forward in time towards the end as a way of integrating oneself with the beginning'.[16] Seen in this context, the recapitulation at the end of Bede's *History* is multivalent: for the lay reader, it provides a chronological summary of the preceding text and encourages recollection and reconsideration of the context of those events. For Bede's peers, steeped like him in patristic exegesis, it also triggers reflection on the Scriptural role of recapitulation as a tool for revealing deeper meanings previously hidden, for gathering up 'all things in Christ' (carefully placed by Bede within years *Anno Domini*), and for disrupting linear narratives in order to 'move back and forth from past, to present, to future'.[17]

The role of such a recapitulation within a work of history, however, is unusual. Its 'chronological sequence' means that it also functions as a linear framework to orientate the reader around a text which is broadly, but not strictly chronological in its structure.[18] There is nothing comparable in the best-known historical sources familiar to Bede: Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica*, translated into Latin by Rufinus, or Gregory of Tours' *Libri decem historiarum*. Consequently, there are questions about its purpose and what it might reveal about Bede's methodology for writing the *History*. To address either question, however, we must first consider the origin of the recapitulation. Was it an existing source which Bede incorporated at the conclusion of his work, or did Bede compile it for the *History*? If the latter, at what stage in Bede's writing process might it have been composed?

Lehmann, Levison and others argued that the annals in the recapitulation were either among Bede's sources or 'remnants of preparatory work'.[19] However, it seems more likely

[15] Jan Davidse, 'The Sense of History in the works of the Venerable Bede', *Studi Medievali*, 23 (1982), 647–95; Peter Darby, *Bede and the End of Time* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 207–14; Máirín MacCarron, 'Christology and the Future in Bede's *Annus Domini*,' in Peter Darby and Faith Wallis (eds), *Bede and the Future* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 161–79 at 171–9.
[16] Michael P. Foley, 'The Reform of the Calendar and the Reduction of Liturgical Recapitulation', in Alcuin Reid, ed., *Liturgy in the Twenty-First Century: Contemporary Issues and Perspectives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 321–41 at 323–4.
[17] Wallis, *Bede: Commentary on Revelation*, 15.
[18] Plummer noted: 'The way in which Bede wrote his history, by subjects, rather than by order of time, rendered a chronological summary very necessary'. *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. 2, 343.
[19] P. Lehmann, *Fuldaer Studien*, Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Kl. 3 (Munich, 1925), 34–8; Levison, 'Bede as Historian', in Thompson (ed.), *Bede: his Life,*

that Bede composed the recapitulation for the *History*, rather than it being an interpolation of a singular, pre-existing source into the finished work. There are three principal reasons for preferring this hypothesis: firstly, although the entries are laconic, like many early medieval chronicles, the selection of material and their close relationship with the narrative of Bede's *History* suggests it works best as a recapitulation of that pre-existing work rather than as a source for it. Secondly, the terminal limits of the recapitulation exactly match the terminal limits of the main narrative in the *History*. The first date in both is Julius Caesar's invasion of Britain (*HE* I.2) in 60 BC, and the final date is AD 731 (*HE* V.23).[20] Caesar's invasion is particularly important because it is the only time in the entire book that a date before the incarnation is used: *ante incarnationem dominicam*. Although AD dates occur in several other sources in the early eighth century, it is hard to find any other example of a specific event dated before the incarnation.[21] Consequently, this dating formula, applied to a historical event, may be a Bedan invention. This leads to the third reason for arguing that the recapitulation is not an interpolation: the recapitulation is based solely on *Anno Domini* (AD) chronology, which is, famously, the primary chronological system of the main text of the *History*. Even the 60 BC date for Caesar's invasion is an incarnation date, because Bede dated it to 'before' the incarnation.

AD dates began to appear in the late-seventh and early-eighth centuries in north-western Europe, thanks to the dissemination of the Dionysian Easter tables. Prior to Bede's *History*, AD-dating was primarily used as a prospective chronology for calculating future dates in the Dionysian Easter table and its continuations, and, for contemporaneous purposes, in charters and occasional annular entries in Easter tables.[22] The Northumbrian missionary Willibrord, later of Echternach, dated three events from his own life using AD-dating in an autobiographical note that he included in the margins of the month of November in his own Calendar.[23] These dates (690, 695 and 728) would have been relatively easy to

Times and Writings, 111–51, at 136–7. For discussion, see J. Story, 'The Frankish Annals of Lindisfarne and Kent', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 34 (2005), 59–109, at 97–9.

[20] See above and note 4 for discussion of possible authorial revision after 731. Bede dated Caesar's first invasion a little earlier than the date used by modern chronographers, because minor discrepancies can arise when synchronising unrelated chronological systems. See further in Denis Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: ancient time and the beginning of history* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2007), 7–16; Alden Mosshammer, *The Easter Computus and the origins of the Christian era* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008, repr. 2009), 10–39.

[21] There is much discussion in patristic commentaries of the significance of 'before the incarnation' but Bede appears to be the first to date an event using that formulation.

[22] MacCarron, *Bede and Time*, 139–42.

[23] Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, MS Latin 10837, fols 34v–40r; the calendar for November is on fol. 39v.

determine using a Dionysian Easter table, and contemporary 19-year cycles from that table immediately follow the Calendar.[24] However, there are no known examples of retrospectively *calculated*, historical AD dates prior to Bede's *History*. Bede had earlier included two AD dates in the *DTR* chronicle, which he completed in AD 725. The first of these was from a time before living memory, namely, the beginning of the Dionysian tables in 532, and this date was clearly taken from the Easter table itself rather than being calculated by Bede. The second AD date in Bede's *DTR* concerned Iona's recent decision to accept the Dionysian Easter in 716. Bede also included two AD dates in the *Historia abbatum*, also written *c*. 716: the date for the foundation of Wearmouth in 674, and the date of Ceolfrith's departure from Wearmouth-Jarrow and subsequent death in 716. The anonymous *Life of Ceolfrith* also dated the foundation of Wearmouth to 674, and both sources aligned the AD year with Ecgfrith's regnal year and the indiction. The similarity in dating clauses suggests that there either was some form of foundation charter in Wearmouth or a dedication inscription (such as that which still exists in Jarrow) which preserved the foundation date in some form that could be translated relatively easily into years AD.[25] Alternatively, the anonymous author followed Bede.[26] That the recapitulation is structured on AD dates, many of which predate living memory and several of which predate the creation of the Dionysian Easter table, makes it most unlikely that Bede had a pre-existing source, and far more likely that many of these AD dates, which appear for the first time in Bede's *History*, were calculated by him for the purposes of the *History*.

A final consideration concerns when the recapitulation was written, and whether it started life as Bede's research notes (as Levison thought) before being incorporated into the work, or was specifically created as a recapitulation of the five books that precede it.[27] The

[24] Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 10837, fols 40v–41v, and fol. 44r.
[25] For the dedication inscription at Jarrow, which uses the regnal years of Ecgfrith and the abbatial years of Ceolfrith, see, R. J. Cramp, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture,* Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1984), 113–14, pl. 98, no. 524 (Jarrow, no. 17).
[26] *Historia abbatum* 4, in Christopher Grocock and I.N. Wood (eds), *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2013), 22–75; *Vita Ceolfridi* 7, in Grocock and Wood (eds), *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, 78–121. See further MacCarron, *Bede and Time*, 125. For discussion of the relationship between Bede's *Historia abbatum* and the anonymous *Vita Ceolfridi*, see Christopher Grocock and I.N. Wood, 'Introduction,' in Grocock and Wood (eds), *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, lxi–xcv.
[27] Levison argued that the recapitulation 'might only be explained as remnants of preparatory work': Levison, 'Bede as Historian,' 136. Shaw follows Levison but dramatically expands upon his forebear's ideas with the invention of Bede's so-called 'calculation table': Richard Shaw, *How, When, and Why did Bede write his* Ecclesiastical History*?* (London: Routledge, 2022), Appendix 2. Higham argues that the recapitulation was written at the same time as the preface, after the main text had been completed. He suggests it was a 'defensive strategy' that arose 'as a consequence of adverse comment' on the

evidence indicates that the recapitulation in its current form was written late in Bede's process and certainly after 725 when he had completed the *DTR* chronicle. There is a distinctive difference between Bede's accounts of the conversion of the English in the *DTR* chronicle and the *History*, revealing the development of his knowledge of the Roman missions to Britain. In the *DTR* chronicle, s.a. 4557, he referred to only one mission sent by Gregory the Great with Augustine, Mellitus, John, and other monks, which closely follows the information provided in the *Liber pontificalis* for Gregory's papacy.[28] However, in Book I of the *History*, he discussed the arrival of two different groups of missionaries sent from Rome. The first was led by Augustine and arrived in Britain in 597. After Augustine's initial successes in Kent, Bede wrote that Augustine went back to Gaul, to Arles, to be consecrated as 'archbishop of the English people' and sent two members of his mission – Laurence and Peter – back to Rome to report to Gregory the Great.[29] Gregory responded to questions that Augustine had asked and sent him additional missionaries, including Mellitus, Justus (both future incumbents of the metropolitan see at Canterbury) and Paulinus (the future bishop of York).[30] By the time he wrote this section, Bede had gained a far deeper knowledge of the Roman missionaries' activities, deriving new knowledge from copies of papal letters regarding the mission to the English that Nothhelm had discovered in the papal archives in Rome and brought back to Bede. The limited information about Augustine's mission in the *DTR* chronicle indicates that Bede did not receive the papal letters discovered by Nothhelm until after 725. There is an argument that Bede had written much of Book I and Book II of the *History* prior to receiving the papal letters and had to reframe some aspects of his narrative to incorporate his new understanding of the Roman missions. Bede included several papal letters in the latter chapters of both books, perhaps because it proved easier to incorporate them at the end of pre-existing sections than to rewrite them completely. It is difficult to determine the stages in which Bede wrote the *History*, or for how many years the endeavour lasted, but it is clear that his knowledge about the Roman missions to Britain vastly improved during the late 720s following Nothhelm's research in the papal archives in Rome.[31]

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first draft which (as the preface reveals) Bede had previously shared with King Ceolwulf: Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede*, 84 and 93–5.

[28] *LP* 66.3, ed. L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis: Texte, Introduction et Commentaire*, Vol. 1 (Paris 1886).

[29] *HE* 1.27. For Bede's invention of Augustine's archiepiscopal status, see J. Story, 'Bede, Willibrord and the letters of Pope Honorius I on the genesis of the archbishopric of York', *English Historical Review*, 127 (2012), 783–818, esp. 784 and 814.

[30] *HE* I.29.

[31] *HE* Preface. See Story, 'Bede, Willibrord', 786–90 for the importance of Nothhelm in the transmission of the papal letters and the date that they reached Bede (728).

The information brought by Nothhelm also influenced the content of the recapitulation, since it too refers to the two groups of missionaries sent from Rome, noting, in three separate entries, that the first, led by Augustine, was sent in 596, and arrived in Britain in 597, and the second was sent from Rome in 601. Paulinus is the only missionary named in the 601 entry although Mellitus is named *s.a*. 604 for his evangelisation efforts amongst the East Saxons. Paulinus is highlighted in the 601 entry, presumably for his role as first bishop of the Northumbrians. Indeed, he appears in the recapitulation four times making him the joint most frequently cited individual (along with Archbishop Theodore).[32] The presence of two distinct Roman missions in the recapitulation indicates that the final version at least was probably created on the work's conclusion to serve the very purpose for which Bede says, that of a brief recapitulation of the work's content.[33]

Content

The recapitulation contains 51 entries, all dated by years *Anno Domini*, one before the incarnation and 50 afterwards. The first four entries (including the pre-incarnation event) use versions of Bede's two favourite incarnation dating formulae in turn: *ab anno incarnatione Domini*, and *anno incarnationis dominicae*.[34] After that, from AD 381, each entry is dated simply by the word *anno* and the year number. For the most part, each year-entry concerns one subject: for example, in AD 189, Bede wrote that Severus became Roman emperor and fortified Britain with a wall (cf. *HE* I.5). The recapitulation's laconic style is more reminiscent of Bede's first chronicle in *De temporibus* (chapters 16–22), in which each generation or reign contains additional information on at most one topic, and several do not record anything other

[32] Most individuals are mentioned once only. In addition to Paulinus and Theodore, the other people mentioned more than once are: Gregory the Great, King Edwin of Northumbria, King Ecgfrith of Northumbria, and King Æthelred of Mercia, three times each; and Augustine of Canterbury, Wilfrid of York, King Cenred of Mercia, and the English monk Egbert (who converted Iona to the Dionysian Easter), each mentioned twice. See Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede*, 84–91, who also discusses the frequency with which certain places are named, e.g. Rome.
[33] Contra Shaw, *How, When and Why*, who argues that the recapitulation emerged from Bede's preparatory work for the *History*, specifically a so-called 'calculation table' that Shaw has invented and can be found in his Appendix 2, 240–75. As this table is 36 pages long in a modern book, and formatted using modern spreadsheet software, it reflects no known early medieval source or material reality. Mathew Clear (in his review, *Peritia* 34 [2023], 266–71) notes that the largest surviving Easter table from the early medieval period dates from the early ninth century, has 19 columns spread across facing pages with small margins, and the columns are narrow only allowing space for numerals and dates (Cologne, Dombibliothek, Cod. 83–II, fols 76v–79r). In contrast, Shaw's table has a minimum of 20 columns and he imagines spaces for additional annalistic entries: Clear, 268.
[34] On Bede's formulations for incarnation dating clauses in the *History*, see MacCarron, *Bede and Time*, 125–6.

than information pertaining to the biblical generation or reign.[35] This style of writing is in marked contrast to the presentation of information in Bede's second chronicle, the so-called *Chronica maiora* which forms chapter 66 of *DTR*, in which much more substantial, often discursive, information is contained under many of the year entries.[36] In many respects, the complex nature of the chronicle entries in *DTR* are a precursor for the style of the *History* itself.

Of the 51 entries in the recapitulation, only eight of them concern multiple topics, for the years: 664, 673, 678, 680, 685, 716, 729, 731. Three of these are for years that held English Church councils: 664 (Whitby), 673 (Hertford), and 680 (Hatfield).[37] The Synods at Hertford and Hatfield are indeed mentioned in the relevant years, alongside obits; the Synod of Whitby, however, is absent from the recapitulation. Rather, the entry for 664 notes that there was an eclipse, Eorcenberht (king of Kent) died, Colman returned to Ireland and there was an outbreak of plague. Additionally, Bede noted that Chad and Wilfrid had been consecrated as bishops of the Northumbrians in that year. The absence of direct reference to the Synod of Whitby is surprising given its prominence in the *History* (*HE* III.25) and the importance of Easter calculations to Bede. However, the interest in the 664 solar eclipse (and the lack of reference to Whitby) is mirrored by other collections of early annals, including some found in the margins of Easter tables. A group of eighth- and ninth-century manuscripts containing Easter tables do have notes of some of the first three of these events – the eclipse, Colman's departure and the death of Eorconberht.[38] All of these could have been derived from *HE* IV.1, which opens with the same series of events, although it is possible, given the contemporary controversy around its date, that records of the solar eclipse were circulating independently.[39] Annotations alongside Easter tables may have been the source

[35] Out of 146 chronological entries in the *De temporibus* chronicle, 127 contain additional information (86.9%) but only two of those concern more than one topic (1.4%). For the structure of Bede's first chronicle, see MacCarron, *Bede and Time*, 48–62.
[36] For differences between Bede's chronicles, see MacCarron, *Bede and Time*, 96–116.
[37] The Council of Hatfield is dated to AD 679 in modern scholarship because Hatfield is presented as preparatory to the sixth ecumenical council held in Constantinople in 680–681. Harrison has argued that Bede miscalculated the date by incorrectly aligning the indiction year with the AD year, because Hatfield occurred in September when the indiction year began: *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History to AD 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976), 83–5.
[38] See, Story, 'Frankish Annals', 107–9.
[39] Its correct date was recorded in Ireland; S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Nicaill (eds), *The Annals of Ulster* (Dublin, 1983), 34. On the contemporary debate around the 664 solar eclipse, which Bede says was 'still remembered in our days' (because the observed date – 1 May – was two days earlier than the predicted date – 3 May – of the new moon in the Easter table), see J. Moreton, 'Doubts about the calendar: Bede and the Eclipse of 664', *ISIS* 89 (1998), 50–65, and Story, 'Frankish annals', 98–100, 108–9.

for references to eclipses in 538 and 540 that are the only content in entries in the recapitulation for those years. These solar eclipses are not referred to in the main narrative of the *History,* and, as Levison and others have long since noted, they record eclipses that could not have been seen in Britain and so must have derived from a more southerly, probably Mediterranean source.[40]

There are several differences between the recapitulation and the main narrative of the *History*. These differences may be, in part, due to genre: for example, dating an eclipse to a particular year is common in annals, but unusual for a work of history without further context. However, Bede's willingness to expand the possibilities of chronicle-writing in his *DTR* chronicle indicates that there were other potential factors involved in his decision-making. In the recapitulation, there are nine entries that contain information not in the main *History* narrative; eight of them are single-subject entries and another is added to the entry for 716, one of the few years with multiple topics. In addition to the reference to the eclipses in 538 and 540, the seven other entries with new information not found in the body of the *History* are for the years 547, 675, 697, 698, 704, 711, and 716. Of these, four concern the kingdom of Mercia, which is often regarded as under-represented in the *History*. The entries for 675, 704 and 716 provide a Mercian succession story which runs from Wulfhere through Æthelred and Cenred to Ceolred; 697, however, recounts the murder of Queen Osthryth, the Northumbrian wife of Æthelred, by her Mercian nobles (see below).

A further difference between the recapitulation and the main narrative concerns the precise dating of certain events by AD in the recapitulation when such dates were not provided in the main narrative. There are 21 events that are only dated in the recapitulation.[41] These events fall into two categories: those that can be dated by inference from information included in the text, and those that we would struggle to date without the information provided in the recapitulation. In the first category, for example, are the recapitulation entries for the sack of Rome which Bede dated there to 409 (*HE* I.11), Augustine's mission to the English in 596–7 (*HE* I.23 and I.25), the ordination of Wilfrid in 664 (*HE* III.28 and V.19), and the death of King Ecgfrith of Northumbria in 685 (*HE* IV.26). In those cases, Bede may not have given precise dates in the main text because he did not wish to interrupt the flow of his narrative for stylistic reasons, and he had already provided the reader with sufficient chronological

[40] Levison, 'Bede as Historian', 136–7; D. J. Schove and A. Fletcher, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets, AD 1–1000* (Woodbridge, 1984), 97–8 (with additional references); Thomas Wozniak, *Naturereignisse im frühen Mittelalter. Das Zeugnis der Geschichtsschreibung vom 6. bis 11. Jahrhundert* (Berlin/Boston: DeGruyter, 2020), 197–98 and 816.
[41] See MacCarron, *Bede and Time*, 175–8, Appendix 5 for the full list.

markers. The second category includes, for example, the deaths of Oswine and Aidan in 651 (*HE* III.14), the conversion to Christianity of Peada and the Middle Angles in 653 (*HE* III.21), the death of Penda and the conversion of the Mercians in 655 (*HE* III.24), or the abdication of King Æthelred of Mercia to become a monk in 704 (*HE* V.19). In this respect, the recapitulation is a valuable addition for the reader of the *History*, strengthening its linear framework.

However, there are further differences between the recapitulation and the work it is intended to recapitulate, specifically some notable absences. The most surprising omissions are Cuthbert and Æthelthryth, as neither feature in the recapitulation although both receive special treatment in the main text. Cuthbert's life is recounted *HE* IV.27–32 in what is essentially a mini hagiography, while Æthelthryth is celebrated in both prose and verse in *HE* IV.19–20, in what can be regarded as an *opus geminatum*.[42] In *HE* IV.19, Bede recounted Æthelthryth's life, specifically her decision to preserve her virginity through two marriages, and highlighted her post mortem bodily incorruption. The next chapter, *HE* IV.20, is an abecedarian poem in praise of virginity, which Bede says he had written many years ago (*ante annos plurimos*) and included in the *History* in imitation of Scripture (*imitari morem sacrae scripturae*) which frequently incorporates songs or poems (*carmina*). Bede had similarly memorialised Cuthbert in verse and prose, and he referred to both works in his list of writings that follows the recapitulation in *HE* V.24.[43] Bede also featured both Cuthbert and Æthelthryth in his *DTR* chronicle, indicating that he believed they were of universal importance to the Church.[44]

Indeed, the importance of Æthelthryth for Bede is underlined by the fact that she is the only figure from Britain who features in both his *DTR* chronicle and his *Martyrology* (23 June). Alban, a Briton martyred by the Romans, and the two Hewalds, English missionaries martyred in Germany, are the only other saints from Britain commemorated in the *Martyrology*, and both experienced actual martyrdom, unlike Æthelthryth.[45] Bede believed

[42] See P. Godman, 'The Anglo-Latin *Opus Geminatum*: from Aldhelm to Alcuin,' *Medieval Aevum* 50 (1981), 215–29; Stephen J. Harris, *Bede and Aethelthryth: an introduction to Christian Latin poetics* (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia UP, 2016), esp. 126–57.
[43] *Vita Metrica S. Cuthberti*, ed. Michael Lapidge, in *Bede's Latin Poetry* (Oxford: OUP, 2019), 184–313; *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, ed. Bertram Colgrave in *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert* (Cambridge: CUP, 1940), 142–307.
[44] *DTR* 66, ed. T. Mommsen, repr. in C.W. Jones, CCSL 123B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977), *s.a.* 4652 (Cuthbert), *s.a.* 4639 (Æthelthryth).
[45] Alban is commemorated on 22 June in the *Martyrology* (cf. *HE* I.7); the two Hewalds are together on 30 October (cf. *HE* V.10). On Bede's *Martyrology*, see Paul Hilliard, 'Bede's *Martyrology*: a resource and spiritual lesson,' in Darby and MacCarron (eds), *Bede the Scholar*, 265–83.

that, in preserving her virginity through two marriages, Æthelthryth was his age's equivalent to the virgin martyrs of the early Church, an analogy that is forcefully expressed in his poem where Æthelthryth is named after six virgin martyrs who are presented in pairs based on the martyrdom they experienced.[46] Bede likened Æthelthryth to the virgin martyrs, who were universally revered, because he did not see her simply as a national saint: rather, he believed that Æthelthryth's virginity graced his time, as the virgin martyrs had graced an earlier age. Perhaps Æthelthryth and Cuthbert are absent from the recapitulation because it primarily relates events on the island of Britain (and to a lesser extent Ireland), whereas Bede believed that their importance extended far beyond these shores.

Gender breakdown

The recapitulation includes 60 people: 57 men and three women.[47] Consequently, women account for exactly 5% of the characters in that element of the *History*. This may seem poor, but it is one of the better performances in the chronicle genre with regard to female representation. Of chronicles assessed to date, women account for 3.84% of the characters in Eusebius-Jerome; 2.56% of Prosper's chronicle; 3.17% of Isidore's *Chronica maiora*; 2.41% of the characters in Isidore's *Chronica minora*; 2.5% of Bede's first chronicle in *De temporibus*; and 4.59% of the characters in Bede's *DTR* chronicle. In general, women tend to fare poorly in late antique and early medieval chronicles. In contrast, female representation tends to be higher in narratives sources, i.e. histories and hagiographies from the same period.[48] For example, although women are only 5% of the chronological recapitulation in *HE* V.24, they account for 12.12% of characters in the whole work. Similarly, in Bede's prose *Vita Cuthberti*, women represent 11.93% of characters, and they make up 11.22% of the anonymous *Life* of Cuthbert. In Bede's metrical *Life* of Cuthbert, women account for 7.46% of characters. Of the Northumbrian sources analysed to date, Stephen's *Vita Wilfridi* has scored

[46] *HE* IV.20: they are Agatha and Eulalia who died in the furnace; Thecla and Euphemia who were thrown to the lions; and Agnes and Cecilia who were killed by the sword.
[47] *HE* V.24 in total has 70 characters, the additional characters are all male and they appear in Bede's biographical statement and his list of writings which follow the recapitulation. This section is informed by work carried out as part of the Irish Research Council-funded research project, 'Time for Women? Gender, Chronology and Historiography before AD 900' GENCHRON (IRCLA/2022/2234), led by Máirín MacCarron.
[48] Bede's *History* is our focus here. Other histories that have been assessed include Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica*, in the original Greek and in Rufinus' Latin translation, and Gregory of Tours' *Decem libri historiarum*. The statistical information for the narrative sources was generated for the Leverhulme Trust-funded research project 'Women, Conflict and Peace: Gendered Networks in early medieval narratives' (RPG 2018–014): PI Julia Hillner. The datasets were created by Máirín MacCarron and Ulriika Vihervalli: see further, https://sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/genderednetworks/data.

the highest with women at 15.38% of total characters: i.e. 24 of 156 characters.[49] The two accounts concerned with the foundation of Wearmouth-Jarrow, Bede's *Historia abbatum* and the anonymous *Life* of Ceolfrith, provide the worst female representation as they do not include women.[50]

It is worth considering the role of women in the chronological recapitulation compared with the main narrative of the *History* as the ratio of women is significantly better in the work as a whole. The three women mentioned in the recapitulation are Eanflaed, Hild and Osthryth. Eanflaed and Hild are unsurprising inclusions as they are, arguably, the two most influential women in the book. Eanflaed was the daughter of Edwin of Deira (r. 616–633) and Æthelburh of Kent, and later became the wife of Oswiu of Northumbria (r. 642–670): consequently, she single-handedly linked the royal houses of Deira, Bernicia and Kent, and also brought a Frankish connection to the Northumbrian royal house through her grandmother, Bertha, who had been married to Æthelbert of Kent (r. *c*. 589–616).[51] Eanflaed and Oswiu's reign witnessed the solidifying of the union between the two regions of Deira and Bernicia into the kingdom of Northumbria. She was also a factor in the lead-up to the Synod of Whitby because she followed her 'Roman' Easter practice at the royal court, while Oswiu observed the 'Irish' Easter reckoning; Bede noted that Easter was sometimes celebrated twice in one year at the Northumbrian court in those days (*HE* III.25). Hild was the famous abbess of Whitby, a monastery which, Bede noted, produced five bishops for the Northumbrian Church (*HE* IV.23). She was also connected to both the Roman and Ionan missions to Northumbria. She was a member of the Deiran royal house – her father had been Edwin's nephew – and Bede recorded that she was baptised by the Roman missionary, Paulinus. However, she later worked with Aidan of Lindisfarne and supported the Irish Easter at the Synod of Whitby, which her own monastery hosted (*HE* IV.23). By using network science to analyse the *History*, it can be shown that Hild and Eanflaed were the most influential women in the network of the text. They were the two best connected women in the work (Hild had slightly more connections than Eanflaed) and, in an analysis of influence

[49] See Julia Hillner and Máirín MacCarron, 'Female networks and exiled bishops between Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages: the cases of Liberius of Rome and Wilfrid of York,' in Emma Ó Bérat, Rebecca Hardie and Irina Dumitrescu (eds), *Relations of Power: Women's networks in the Middle Ages* (Bonn: Bonn UP, 2021), 19–44 at 31–40, for a discussion of female representation in Bede's *History* and Stephen's *Vita Wilfridi*.
[50] Note that Ceolfrith's 'noble and religious parents' are referred to in the opening of the anonymous *Life*, but they are not active in the story: *Vita Ceolfridi,* chapter 2.
[51] *HE* II.9, III.15, I.25.

within that network, they were also the most important women: Eanflaed was the more influential by virtue of her closer royal connections.[52]

It is intriguing that their comparative significance in the *History* is also reflected by their inclusion in the chronological recapitulation, when others (such as Æthelthryth) were omitted. The nature of their inclusion in the recapitulation is also important in relation to Bede's stated purpose in recapitulating what had been discussed in more detail before. Eanflaed appears in an entry that recounts her baptism with twelve others at Pentecost 626. This event had been described in *HE* II.9 and was a pivotal moment in Bede's narrative as it heralded the inauguration of the Northumbrian Church, prior to the conversion of her father, Edwin, to Christianity (*HE* II.10–13).[53] Although Eanflaed is mentioned many more times in the *History* proper, her baptism was crucial for Bede's presentation of the Northumbrian conversion, and reference to it in the recapitulation triggers the unfolding of that story.[54] Hild's death is marked in the recapitulation *s.a*. 680 alongside reference to the Synod of Hatfield. Since most entries in the recapitulation only discuss one event, the inclusion of Hild in this entry reinforces her importance to Bede as well as reminding the reader where they could find the full account of her life. Although she was mentioned twice in Book III (III.24 and 25), Bede reserved his full account of Hild for Book IV at the notice of her death, explicitly dated there, as in the recapitulation, to 680 (*HE* IV.23).[55]

The inclusion of Osthryth in the recapitulation is far more surprising, particularly as there is no mention of her death in the main narrative. She appears twice in the main text, at *HE* III.11 and IV.21. In *HE* III.11, Bede recounted her role, when queen of Mercia, in developing the cult of Oswald at the monastery of Bardney, through the translation of parts of his body there and by disseminating stories of his miracle-working relics.[56] Bede took care to remind the reader that, although Osthryth was queen of Mercia, she was also the niece of Oswald. The next reference to her comes in *HE* IV.21, in the context of the battle near the River Trent between the Northumbrians and Mercians in 679, at which the young Northumbrian prince Ælfwine was killed. Bede said that Ælfwine was 'much beloved in both

[52] See Sandra Prado et al., 'Gendered networks and communicability in medieval historical narratives,' *Advances in Complex Systems* 23.3 (2020), for Eanflaed and Hild's influence in the network.
[53] Note that in *HE* II.9, Bede noted that she was baptized with eleven others.
[54] See further in Máirín MacCarron, 'Royal marriage and conversion in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*', *Journal of Theological Studies* 68:2 (2017), 650–70.
[55] Bede observed a similar practice in his *DTR* chronicle where he usually discussed imperial activities under the year an emperor died, rather than the year their reign began.
[56] Alan Thacker, '*Membra disjecta*: the division of the body and the diffusion of the cult', in C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge (eds), *Oswald: Northumbrian king to European saint* (Stamford: Paul Watkins Publishing, 1995), 97–127.

kingdoms' because his sister, Osthryth, was queen of Mercia, implying that Ælfwine frequented her court. Bede's entry for 679 in the recapitulation, however, records only the killing of Ælfwine. This was presumably sufficient to prompt the reader to recall not so much the battle where he died but rather the *pactum* (*foedera pacis*) that was negotiated by Archbishop Theodore in its aftermath in order to diffuse the customary blood feud that, Bede says, was triggered by Ælfwine's death at the hands of the Mercians.[57]

There is no further reference to Osthryth in the main text of the *History*, so the recapitulation notice of her assassination in 697 is wholly unexpected and cannot be adequately contextualised by a reader. In fact, the absence of any mention of Osthryth's death in the main text aligns with Bede's under-reporting of Mercian-Northumbrian relations in the decades around 700. He does not say which side came out victorious at Trent in 679 (it was Mercia), nor does he reveal in the annal for 704 that the Mercian combatant, King Æthelred (Osthryth's husband), having resigned his crown, probably retired as a monk to Bardney. Perhaps this was because it would have further emphasised Mercian control of Lindsey as well as the southern sympathies of that house, in spite of its control of corporeal relics of the Northumbrian saint-king Oswald. One later source which links Æthelred to Bardney claims that both he and Osthryth were buried and venerated there.[58] It is hard to read her assassination in 697 as anything other than a dangerous resurgence of regional factionalism and, perhaps, Bede thought his readers would come to that conclusion, unveiling a meaning, hidden in the first instance; her violent death recalled that of her brother Ælfwine, and may have jeopardised the oaths of *amicitia* between the two ruling families that Theodore had negotiated between the kingdoms 18 years earlier. In that sense, the annal for 697 paralleled that for 679 and encouraged renewed reflection of the account of the *pactum* in *HE* IV.21 which named both siblings. If Osthryth had played any role in exacerbating the situation leading up to her death, Bede would very likely have chosen to suppress that information in the main body of the *History* as he tended to exclude information about queens as antagonists. For example, he excised all references to Queen Iurminburgh of Northumbria from his account of Bishop Wilfrid's travails, despite the fact that she was the chief culprit in

[57] On the *pactum* and its possible reflection in the early entries of the Northumbrian *Liber Vitae* (London, British Library, Cotton MS Domitian A.vii), see J. Gerchow, 'The Origins of the Durham *Liber Vitae*', in David Rollason, A. J. Piper, Margaret Harvey and Lynda Rollason (eds), *The Durham* Liber Vitae *and its Context* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), 45–62 at 57–61.
[58] D. W. Rollason, 'Lists of saints' resting-places in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 7 (1978), 61–93 at 89. A spurious charter in favour of Crowland (S82) says he was the abbot of Bardney.

Stephen's account, which Bede had used as a source.[59] Whatever Bede's reasons for omitting Osthryth's murder from the main narrative, he must have believed the event was of sufficient importance that he chose to introduce such dramatic new information in the recapitulation despite the absence of an explicit link to the main narrative.

The recapitulation and the 'Moore Memorandum'

The recapitulation to Bede's *History* holds an important place in the development of annals as a form of historiographical writing. It may be the earliest historiographical text to use serial, sequential AD dating as the structuring principle; that format, of short historical notes organised by the year of the Incarnation, proved highly enduring and adaptable. Indeed, the adaptability of the format can be seen from the very beginning of the transmission of the *History.* The recapitulation is integral to what is very likely to be the earliest extant manuscript of the *History*, named the Moore Bede after one of its owners, John Moore (1646–1714), who was bishop of Norwich (1691–1707) and then of Ely (1707–14). Both the script, and the additions to this copy of the *History*, suggest that it was probably completed within a few years of Bede's death, that is, in 737 or not long after. This copy of the *History* is unusual among the eighth-century witnesses to that text in that it was written in long lines rather than the two-column format that is found in other early manuscripts. This includes the recapitulation on fols 126r–127v where the entries run on one from another, with individual entries demarcated by a larger initial letter **a** for *anno*, before the numeral that identifies the year. The recapitulation in this early manuscript is presented as continuous prose rather than as a list.

On what is now the last folio (fol. 128v), there are a series of texts, including three added by the main hand, namely, Caedmon's Hymn in Old English and a short Latin colophon attributing its authorship to him (lines 1–4), three Latin/OE glosses (line 4) and a chronological 'memorandum' comprising information relating to Northumbrian history (lines 5-12). This item is relevant to the present discussion in its use of a single AD date, seemingly borrowed from the recapitulation. The memorandum comprises two parts: a Northumbrian kinglist that names 17 kings, in sequence, plus the number of years of each reign, followed by a list of 9 events with a count of the number of years since each event had occurred,

[59] See further Hillner and MacCarron, 'Female networks and exiled bishops', 36–40. See also N. J. Higham, 'Wilfrid and Bede's *Historia*,' and Christopher Grocock, 'Wilfrid, Benedict Biscop and Bede – the Monk who knew too much?', in N. J. Higham (ed.), *Wilfrid: Abbot, Bishop, Saint: Papers from the 1300th Anniversary Conference* (Donington: Shayn Tyas, 2013), 54–66 and 93–111.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111369020

supplying implicitly a date for the 'present year' in which the calculations were made. This second list includes the death of Ælfwine, '58 years ago' (679 + 58 = 737). The regnal length of the last-named king, Ceolwulf, and almost all of the chronological calculations in the second part, resolve in the date 737, providing a plausible *terminus post quem* for the composition of this short dense text in its present form, and, given the shared scribe, for copying the manuscript as a whole. What is more, it conforms to the principles of recapitulation discussed above: the first entry 'recapitulates' the Northumbrians 'in Christ', noting that 111 years had passed since Paulinus had started to baptise. This calculation returns the reader back to Bede's annal for 626 which provides the precise date of Eanflaed's baptism 'on the eve of Pentecost', a wholly appropriate feast for the advent of the Northumbrian Church (626 + 111 = 737). The final entry records that 292 years had passed since the arrival of the English in Britain; 'Angli in Brittanniam ante annos CCXCII' (445 + 292 = 737). This updates the calculation that Bede had made in the penultimate chapter of the *History* (*HE* V.23) where he explained his own *annus praesens* of 731 as being 'about 285 years after the coming of the English to Britain', looping the present back to the beginning.

The memorandum is only 8 lines long and, with one exception, the information is provided in highly compressed form. The exception is the opening entry for 547 recording the accession of the first named ruler in the kinglist, Ida. The date, *Anno dxluii*, is followed by a short statement that *Ida regnare coepit*, then by a longer, discursive comment that *a quo regalis Nordanhymrorum prosapia originem tenet, et XII annis in regno permansit*. This whole sentence, including the AD date, is identical to the entry for that year in the recapitulation.[60] Also the same, in both recapitulation and memorandum, is a palaeographical detail of the date: in both instances the Roman numeral has been corrected from *dcluii* to *dxluii* with the addition of a curved, but almost vertical, line forming the left hand stroke of **x** squeezed in after **d** and before **c**. This is quite unlike the form of the letter **x** used elsewhere in this book and seems to be a correction, done by the text scribe, after both entries had been written. This supports other evidence that the main text of the *History* and the supplementary texts at the end of the Moore Bede were written in one campaign. The scribe could have cross-checked the date for Ida's accession by counting up the number of years assigned to the 17 kings in the memorandum's kinglist (190) and calculated 547 as Ida's accession date by counting back 190 years from 737, subsequently correcting both the recapitulation entry for

[60] Peter Hunter Blair, 'The Moore memoranda on Northumbrian history', in Cyril Fox and Bruce Dickins (eds), *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe: H. M. Chadwick memorial studies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 243–258, at 247.

that year on fol. 126v and the memorandum on fol. 128v. The same palaeographical feature can also be seen in the preceding entry in the recapitulation, which records a solar eclipse on 20 June in 540. The solar eclipse of 540, as noted above, like the date of Ida's accession, is among a small number of entries that was not recorded in the main text of the *History*. The accuracy of the recorded date (day, month, year) could have been quite easily checked and corroborated by reference to the date of the moon in an Easter table for that cycle (532–51), since a solar eclipse can only happen at a new moon.[61]

There are three explanations for the shared text about Ida in the Moore Bede; that the memorandum borrowed from the *History*; that the *History* borrowed from the memorandum; or that both *History* and memorandum had a common source. It seems most likely that the comparatively long sentence about Ida's role as progenitor of the Northumbrian royal lineage was borrowed from the recapitulation, and that the extended wording of this entry is Bede's. But it is also probable that Bede had access to a Northumbrian kinglist, including regnal years, very like, if not identical to, the one embedded within the memorandum in order to make the calculation of Ida's accession date and express it in novel form in terms of years of the incarnation. Bede reveals his knowledge of kinglists such as the one used in the memorandum in his account of the two kings who preceded Oswald. In *HE* III.1 he says that, because of the apostasy of these kings, 'it pleases all those computing the times of kings, that the memory of those perfidious kings having been removed from their midst, that this year would be assigned to their successor'. This is indeed what the kinglist in the memorandum does, assigning a reign of 9 rather than 8 years to Oswald (i.e.: r. 633–42), who follows directly from Edwin in that list. In HE III.1 Bede used the present tense to describe those making this computistical decision, presumably including himself among those who compute the times of kings.

It is surprising, however, given the foundational role ascribed to him in the recapitulation entry for 547, that Ida is not mentioned elsewhere in the *History*. The recapitulation annal is another one, therefore, that does not recall an event previously discussed. However, the reference to Ida as the king 'from whom the Northumbrian royal line traces their origin' does invite readers to remember the kingdom's distant, pre-Christian origins, and linking the past to the present. The wording of the Ida entry also aligns with Bede's efforts elsewhere in the *History* to project a unified Northumbrian identity onto earlier times when, in reality, the relationship between the Bernician and Deiran lineages had been

[61] Schove and Fletcher, *Chronology*, viii–ix.

hostile. The memorandum kinglist reveals what is disguised by Bede's turn of phrase, namely that the line of kings who ruled the northern Anglian *provinciae* was dominated by Bernicians descended from Ida. The only Deiran ruler named in the memorandum kinglist was Edwin (r. 616–32). The *History* (including the recapitulation), also contains no mention of any of the six kings named in the memorandum who ruled Northumbria between 559 and 592, and does not supply a year of accession for Æthelfrith, who features as the eighth name in the memorandum, and is the only pagan ruler of the Northumbrians discussed at length by Bede in the body of the *History*.[62] Æthelfrith serves a purpose there as a kind of anti-hero (Bede even compares him to Saul, *HE* I.34)[63] acting as fulfilment of Augustine's prediction about the fate of the haughty Britons at the Battle of Chester and as a foil for the conversion of Edwin, who was the first of the kings of Northumbria to accept Christianity (*HE* II.12). Importantly, however, Æthelfrith also provides the context for the very first Northumbrian event in the *History* dated by the year of the incarnation, that is, the end of the war between the Northumbrians and Irish in 603. Bede was able to compute this AD date by triangulating Æthelfrith's regnal chronology (his eleventh year) with that of the Emperor Phocas (his first year), and – crucially – the length of Æthelfrith's reign. This reveals once again that he must have had access to a Northumbrian kinglist similar to that in the memorandum by noting that Æthelfrith had reigned in total for 24 years. Bede had the information to compute Æthelfrith's accession date, but evidently chose not to. It is, instead, the Battle of Degsastan in AD 603 that is noted in the recapitulation, inviting readers to unpack their memory of Bede's story that had closed Book I of the History and which, in the manner of scriptural recapitulation, tied together the past and present: 'From that time no Irish king in Britain has dared to make war on the English people to this day'.

Variations to the recapitulation

The Moore manuscript is clearly a very early witness to the text of the *History*. It also provides important evidence that the annals in the recapitulation were, from earliest times, subject to revision, interpolation, and continuation. These variations can be tracked through

[62] The Deiran king Ælle is mentioned in passing in the context of the story about Gregory the Great's encounter with English slaves in Rome, and the word-play on the words *Angli* and *Deiri*. On being told that the king of the Deiran slaves was named Ælle, he said 'Alleluia!': *HE* II.1. Cf. *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an anonymous monk of Whitby*, c. 9, ed. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1968). On this story, see Colgrave, *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, 144–5; Stephen J. Harris, 'Bede and Gregory's Allusive Angles,' *Criticism* 44.3 (2002), 271–89.
[63] On Æthelfrith as Saul, see Jennifer O'Reilly, *St Paul and the Sign of Jonah: Theology and Scripture in Bede's Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*, Jarrow Lecture 2014, 6–11.

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families of manuscripts that show the dispersal of the text over time within England and Carolingian Francia. The text of Bede's *History* itself is remarkably stable, reflecting the authority of its author; two major recensions – broadly speaking – map onto the distribution of the manuscripts in England and Francia. Additions to the Moore Bede made in Caroline minuscule show that it was in Francia by c. 800, and many copies made in Francia seem to depend on its idiosyncratic readings. Similarly, the bulk of early manuscripts copied in England belong to another version of the text, exemplified by an early ninth-century copy, made probably in Canterbury (now London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius C. II). The differences between these two recensions (called the 'm-type' and 'c-type' respectively) have long been recognised and they form the foundation of our understanding of the textual transmission of the *History* and its early circulation in England and Francia. Investigations of chronicle materials associated with these early manuscripts, however, are making it increasingly clear that 'mixed' types also circulated and that the textual history of the *History* is not quite as binary as many have thought. It is important for the history of history-writing, however, that it is the closing set of annals rather than the main narrative that later writers thought able to adapt.

Among the differences between the recensions are variations in the contents of the recapitulation. The c-type manuscripts exclude the entries for 697 and 698 (the murder of Osthryth and the death of the Northumbrian *dux* Beorhtred at the hands of the Picts). They also truncate the entry for 731, omitting the statement that Tatwine was the ninth archbishop in Canterbury and that his consecration had occurred in the '15th year of the powerful rule (*agente imperii*) of Æthelbald, king of the Mercians'. In place of this clause, the recapitulation in the c-type manuscripts continues with two new annals, concerning eclipses of the sun and moon in 733 and 734 respectively; these follow immediately and are placed before Bede's autobiographical statement. In the c-type manuscripts, therefore, the recapitulation extends beyond the *annus praesens* of 731 that was provided by Bede at the end of *HE* V.23. There, his final chronological calculation closes the loop of his whole narrative, counting 'about 285 years' since the *adventus Anglorum in Brittaniam* until the present day, that is, 'the year of the Lord's incarnation, 731'. Notably, this calculation, updated to a new *annus praesens*, also completes the Moore memorandum (*angli in britanniam an. ccxcii*), further underlining the link between that text and the *History* that precedes it in its unique manuscript copy.

The eclipse annals for 733 and 734 are also found in the Moore Bede. In that manuscript, however, they are not included within *HE* V.24 (as in the c-type manuscripts) but were added by the text scribe at the end, after the explicit for the whole work, filling and

completing the text block on fol. 128r. Here, the eclipse annals follow two others that record, in 731, an attempted coup against King Ceolwulf in Northumbria and the expulsion of Bishop Acca from his see and, in 732, the accession of Ecgberht to the bishopric of York. The first of these may well explain why Bede finished the *History* in 731; the Preface dedicates the *History* to King Ceolwulf, and Acca had been one of his closest correspondents. Until quite recently, it was thought that this set of four ”Moore Annals” was unique to the Moore Bede, and that the political turbulence of 731 was hidden to all but its readers; since the Moore Annals follow the explicit to the work as a whole in that manuscript, they were excluded from its direct progeny copied in Francia. It is now apparent, however, that the Moore Annals survived in England, and, in a few instances, were interpolated en bloc at the end of the recapitulation. In these manuscripts, therefore, a reader will find two annals for 731, with the explosive entry on Ceolwulf's forced tonsuring following the account of the consecration of Tatwine as the ninth archbishop of Canterbury in the fifteenth year of the powerful rule of Æthelbald.[64] The juxtaposition between the *agente imperii* of ascendant Mercian hegemony and the implosion of Northumbrian kingship could not have been made more stark.

The Moore Annals describe events in Bede's own lifetime and it is possible that he, or others around him at Wearmouth Jarrow, were responsible for their content and preservation, as well as decisions around copying or omission from early iterations of the *History*.[65] The Moore Memorandum similarly shows experimentation with chronological information not long after Bede's death, and the manuscript reveals a copyist able to compare and correct chronological data across text boundaries. Indeed, the annals in the recapitulation remained a place where others felt able to augment Bede's work, in a way that is unimaginable elsewhere in the text. Two well-defined groups of manuscripts, identified by Plummer, make considerable modifications to the recapitulation, including annals for 658 (accession of Wulfhere), 667 (*noster abbas scripsit*), and entries for 686 and 692, as well as additions to 705, that focus on the career of Bishop Wilfrid of York.[66] The enigmatic record of the literary efforts of the unnamed abbot is especially puzzling, and Westgard suggests an alternative

[64] See, for example, London, BL, Harley MS 3680, fol. 172r, copied c. 1120x1140 at Rochester; on this manuscript, and others containing the “Moore Annals” see, Story, ‘After Bede’, 168–74. Elisabetta Magnanti has since discovered the Moore Annals in some other copies of the *History*, discussed in her forthcoming thesis from the University of Vienna.
[65] On the early transmission, see especially J. Westgard, ‘New Manuscripts of Bede's Letter to Albinus’, *Revue Bénédictine* 120 (2010), 208–15.
[66] Plummer, *Bedae Opera*, i civ-v; Mynors, ‘Textual Introduction’, xlix-lii; Joshua A. Westgard, ‘The Wilfridian Annals in Winchester Cathedral Library, MS 1 and Durham Cathedral Library, MS B. II. 35’, in G. H. Brown and L. E. Voigts (eds), *The Study of Medieval Manuscripts of England. Festschrift in honour of Richard W. Pfaff* (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2010), 209–23.

reading (*noster abbas scribit*) and the possibility of a now-lost compilation focusing on the conversion of Mercia.[67] Much more substantial than these Wilfridian entries are a set of 19 annals recording events from 732–66 that follow straight on from the Bedan recapitulation in a late group of at least 11 manuscripts, several of which were copied in the Netherlands. These probably reflect the export to Francia of a copy of the *History c*. 770, and the York-centred narrative of those annals could indicate its place of origin.[68] Chronicles, and annals, in the middle ages were commonly treated thus, with accretions and additions being added by readers and incorporated by later copyists. Quite quickly, it seems, the recapitulation annals in *HE* V.24 became a forward-looking text that was treated by later copyists as if it were an anonymous chronicle capable of emendation, augmentation and continuation. What is more, in the case of Bede's *History*, these travelling annals provide a key to understanding not just its author's methods and sources, but also the transmission of its host text, the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, through time and across space to readers in Carolingian Francia far beyond Northumbria.

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[67] Westgard, 'The Wilfridian Annals', 214 n. 17 and 219–21.
[68] Story, 'After Bede', 177–9.